

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a system 100 for providing interactive services to a set top box 22. The system 100 includes a service provider head end 10, a set top box 22, and a remote server 48. The service provider head end 10 includes a media server 12, an EPG server 16, and an ISP host 38. The media server 12 includes a media database 14. The EPG server 16 includes a program listing database 18. The ISP host 38 includes a content database 52. The set top box 22 is connected to the service provider head end 10 via a network 20. The set top box 22 is also connected to audio/visual devices 26 and internet appliances 28 via a network 30. The set top box 22 is further connected to a remote server 48 via the Internet 44. The remote server 48 is also connected to the Internet 44.

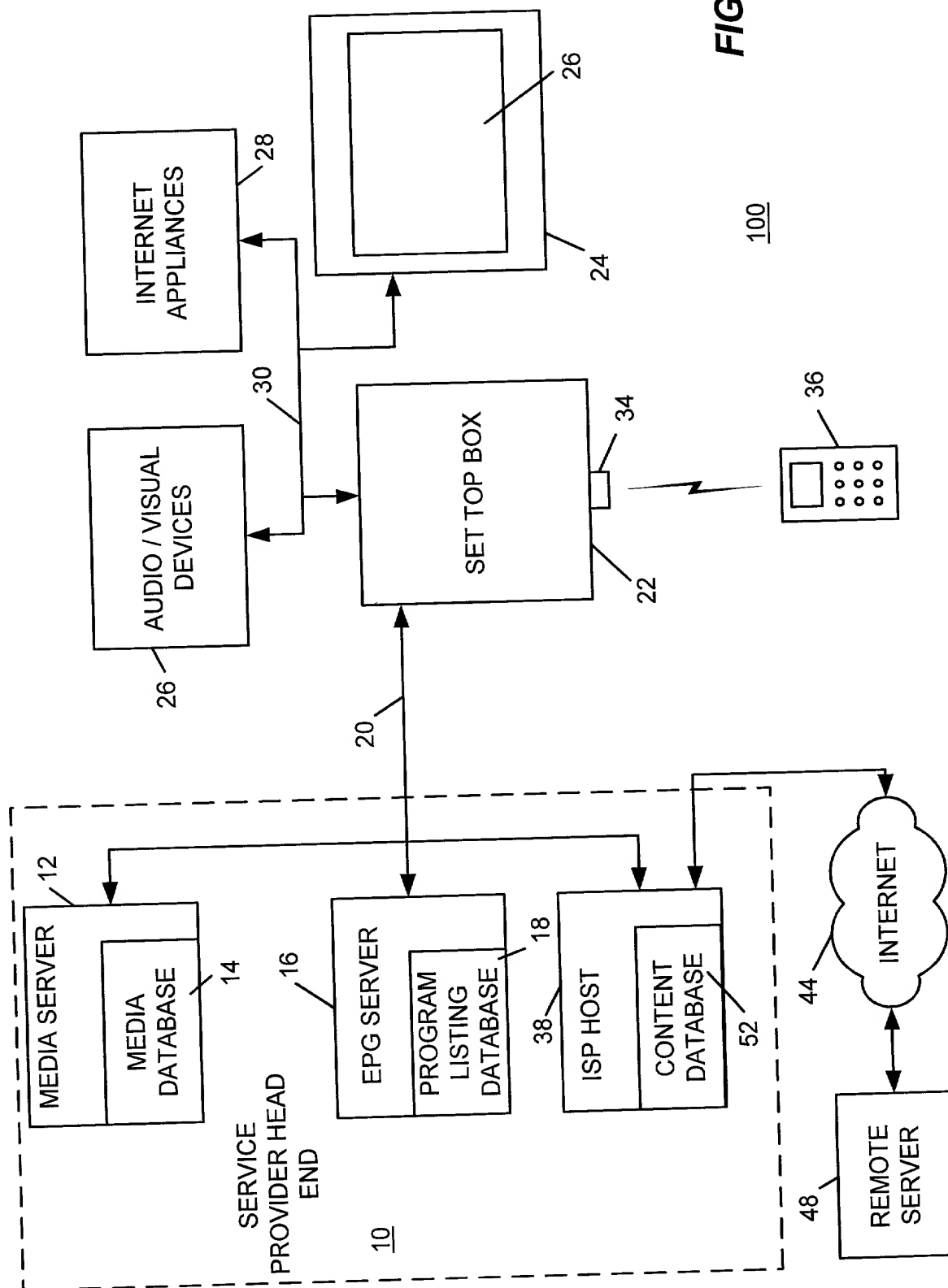


FIG. 1

FIG. 2 is a block diagram of a system 20 according to one embodiment of the present invention.

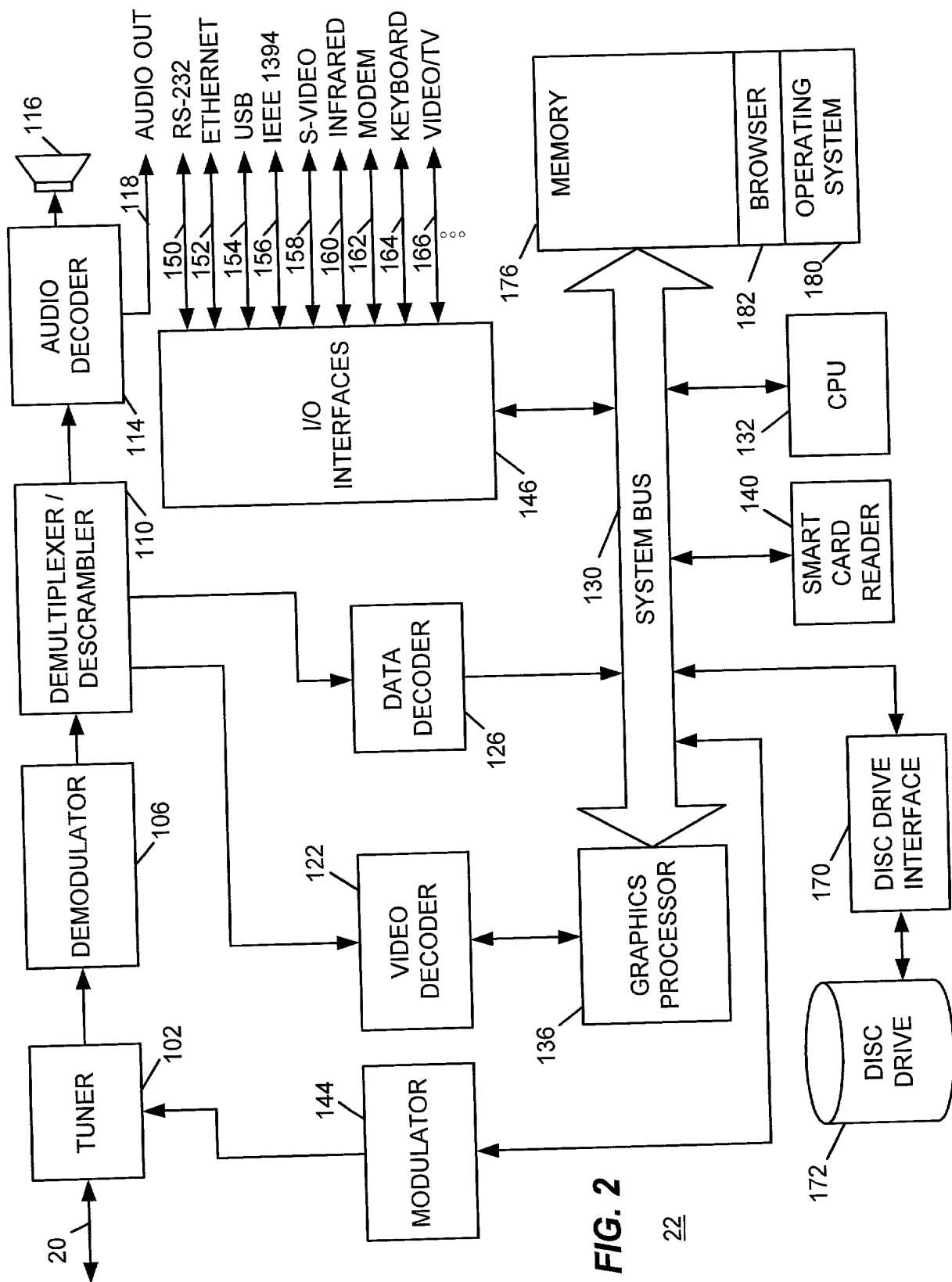


FIG. 2

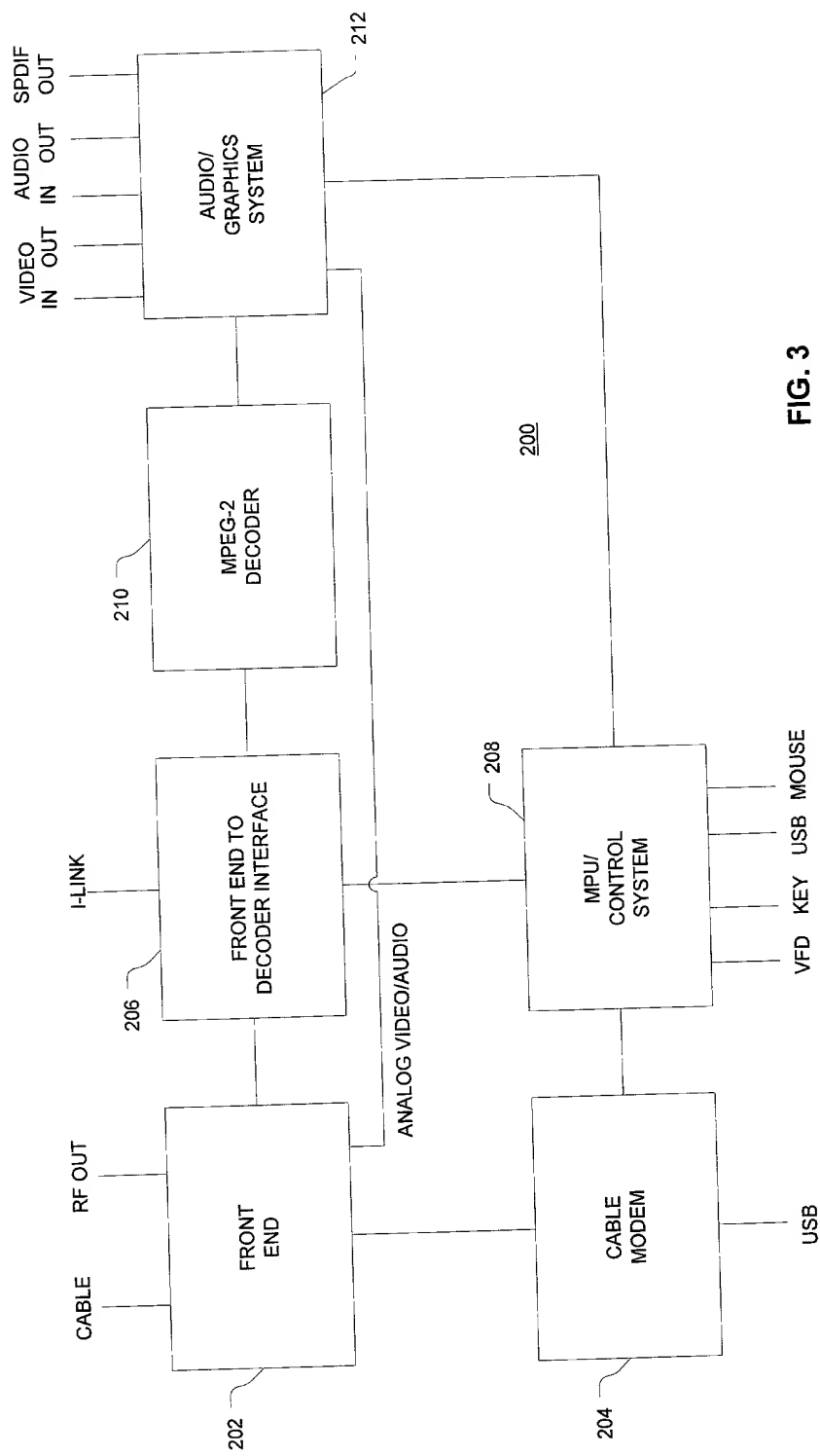


FIG. 3

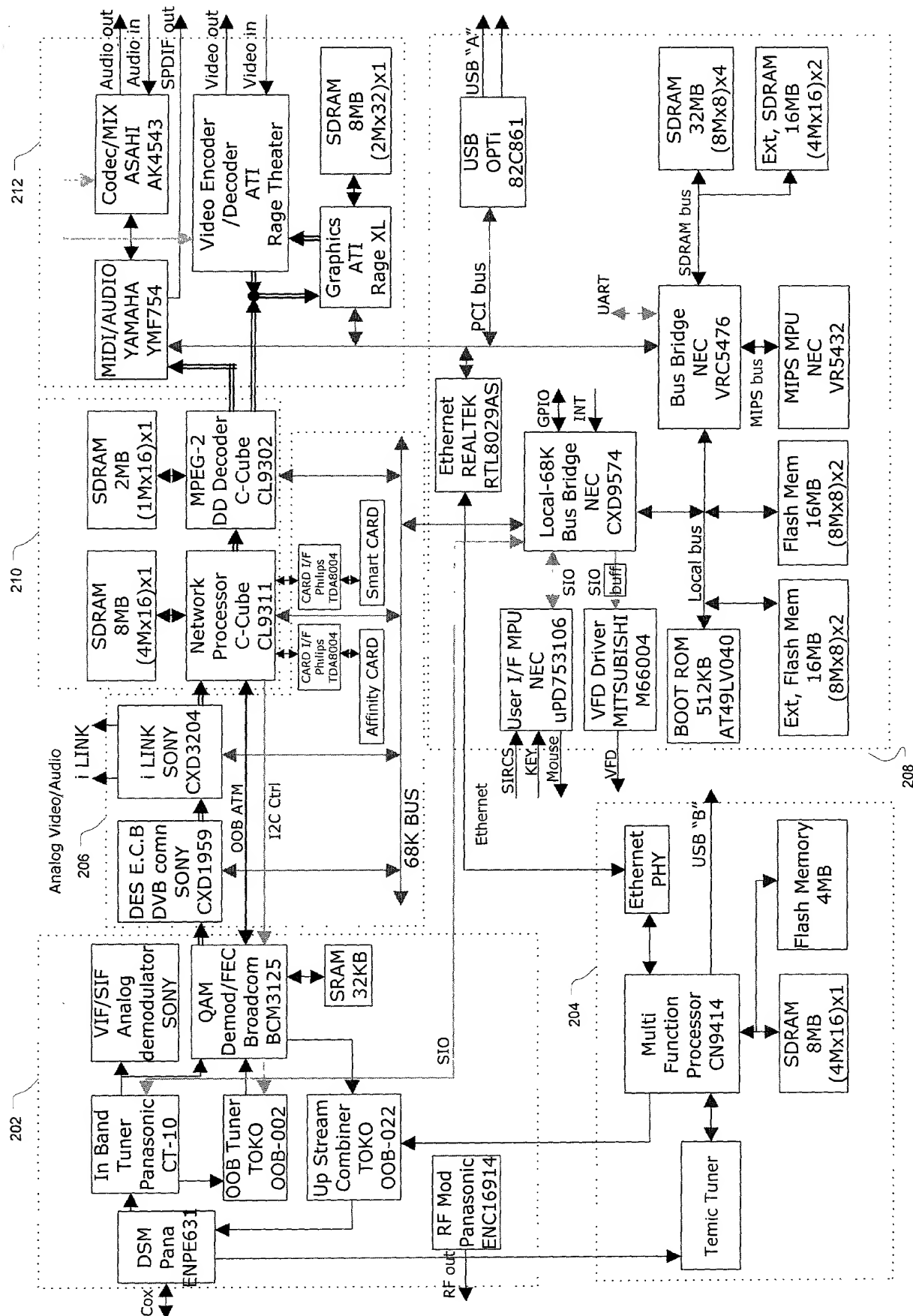


FIG. 4

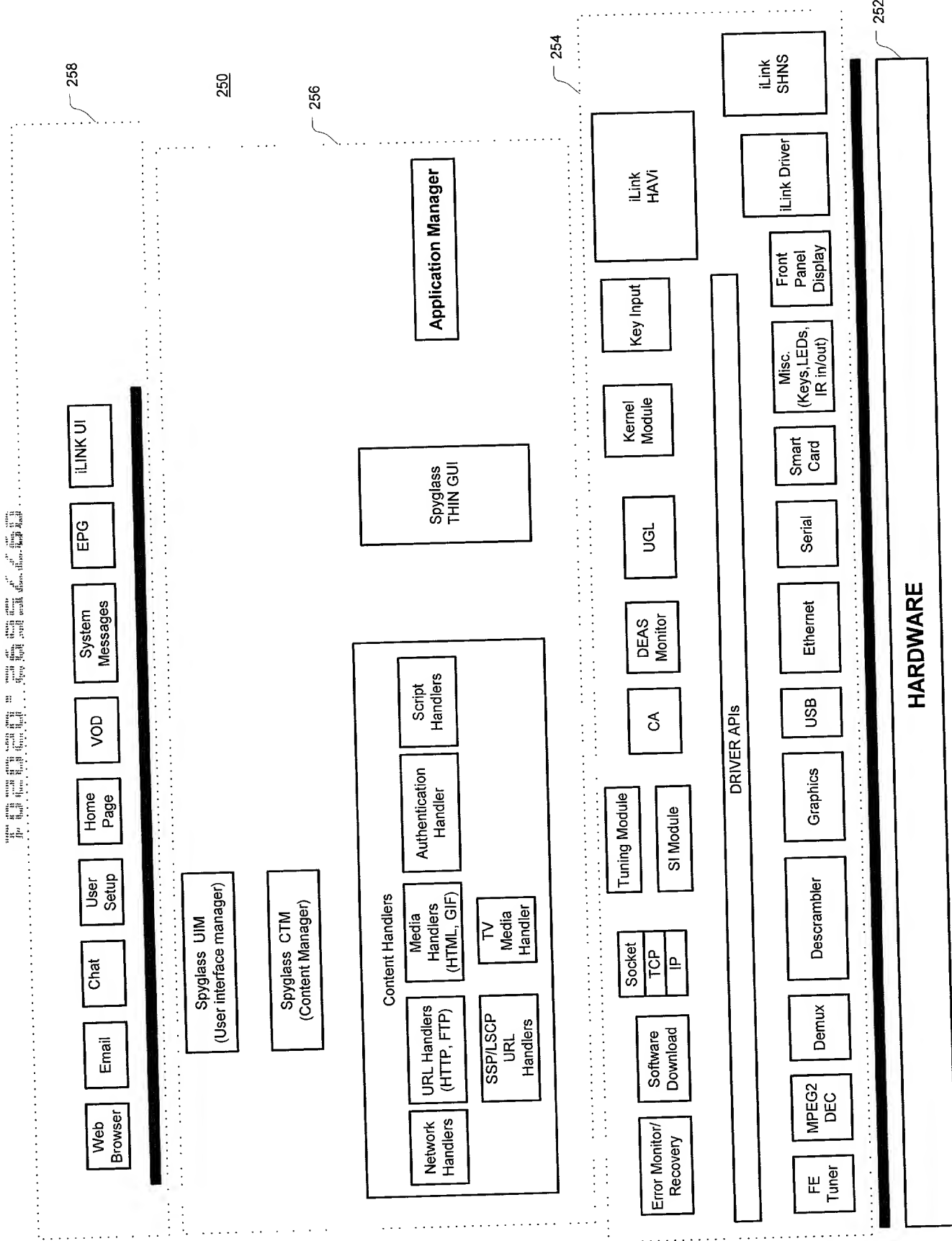


FIG. 5

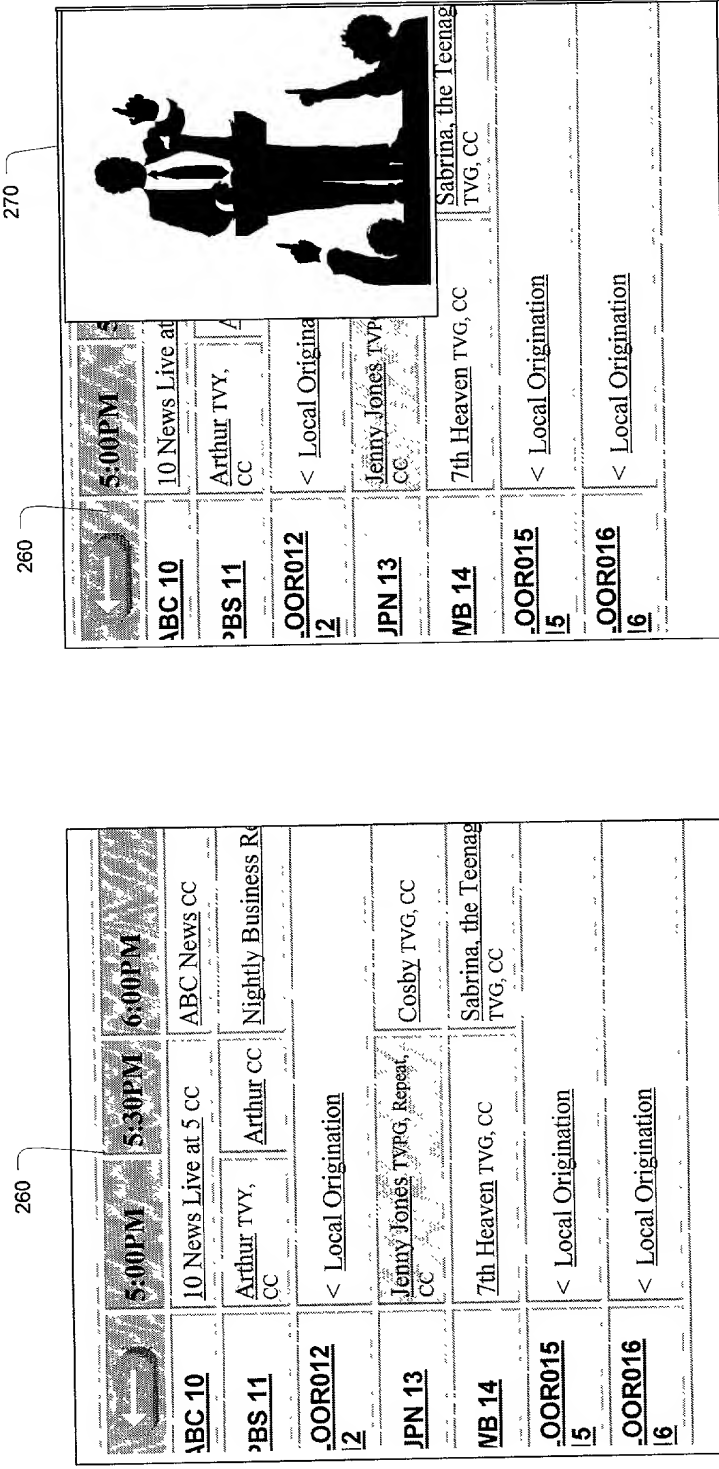


FIG. 6A

FIG. 6B

FIG. 6C is a schematic diagram of a television screen 260 displaying a program guide. The program guide is organized into a grid with columns for time slots (5:00PM, 5:30PM, 6:00PM) and rows for channels (ABC 10, CBS 11, OOR012, JPN 13, NB 14, OOR015, OOR016). The program guide lists various programs including '10 News Live at 5 CC', 'Arthur TVY, CC', 'Local Origination', 'Jenny Jones TVPG, Repeat, CC', 'Cosby TVG, CC', and 'Sabrina, the Teenage Witch TVG, CC'. A small inset image 270 is shown in the bottom right corner of the screen, depicting a man in a suit and a woman in a dress standing together.

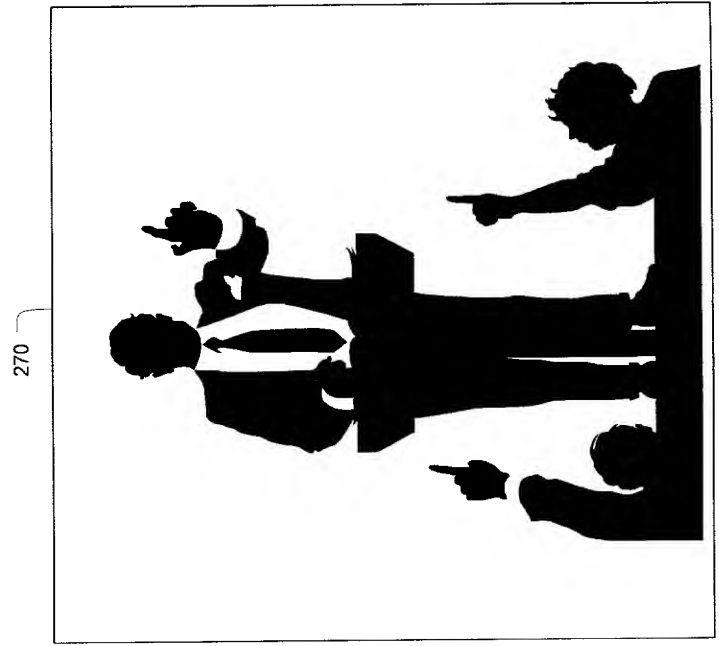


FIG. 6C

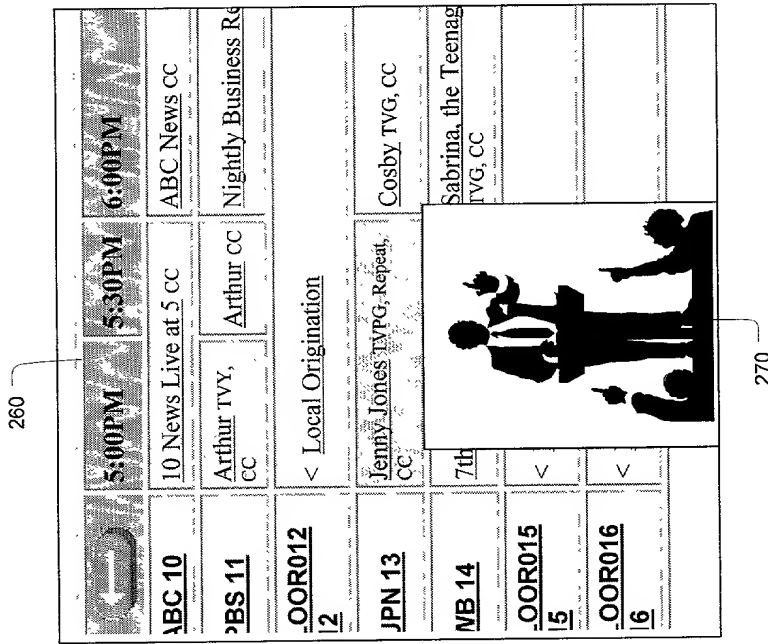


FIG. 6D

FIG. 7 is a block diagram of a TV system 300. The TV system 300 includes a TV state machine 310, a content handler APIs 302, an event decoder 304, an SPD decoder 306, and platform APIs 320. The TV state machine 310 includes private data structures 312, state machine 314, APIs 316, and action routines 318. The platform APIs 320 include TV control 322, OSD 324, front panel display 326, timer utility 328, and video scaling 332.

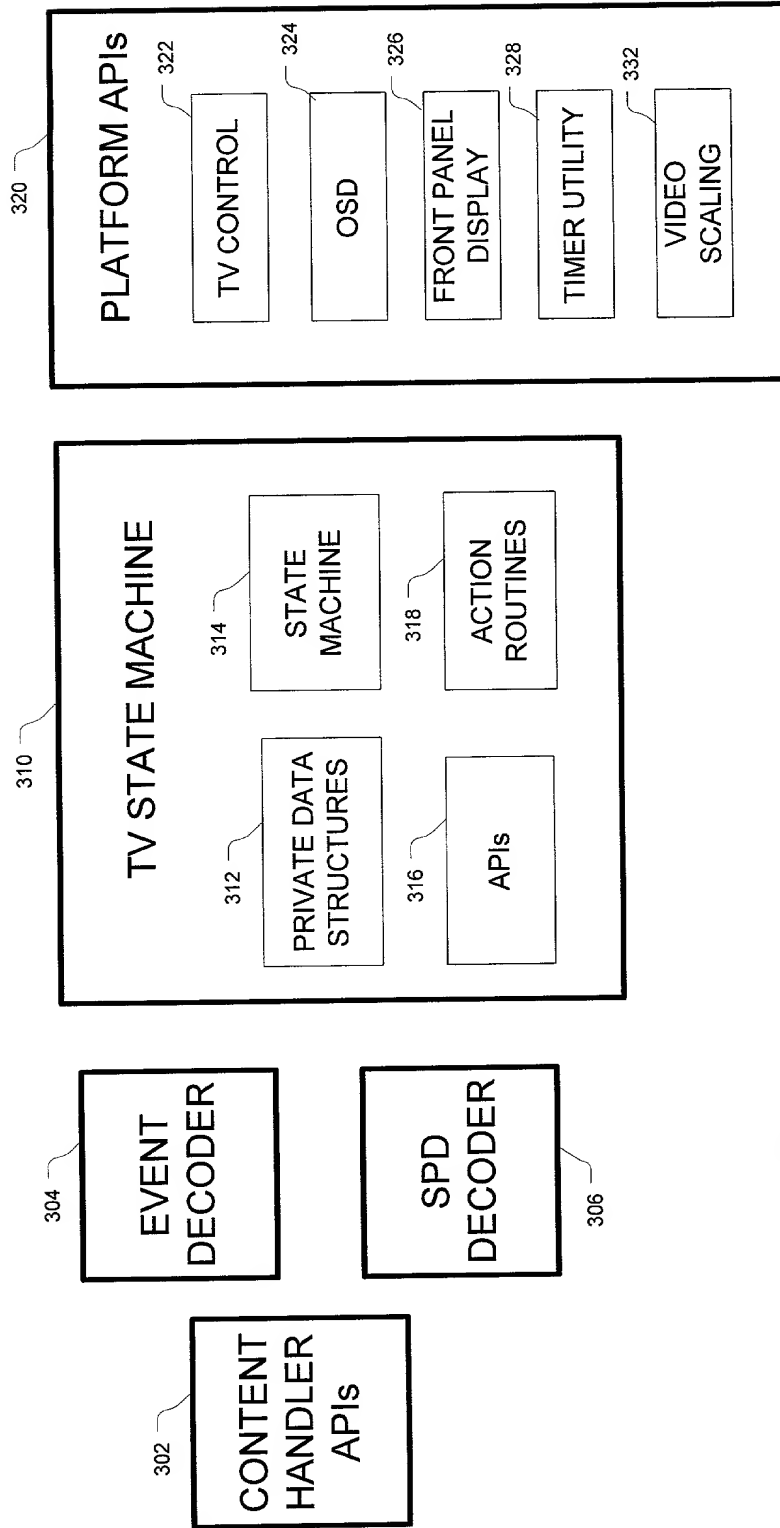


FIG. 7



FIG. 8 is a flowchart illustrating a process for activating a TV media handler plugin. The process starts at a START block, leading to a decision block 402 labeled "VIDEO MEDIA DETECTED?". If the answer is "NO", the process ends. If the answer is "YES", the process proceeds to a block 404 labeled "ACTIVATE TV MEDIA HANDLER PLUGIN".

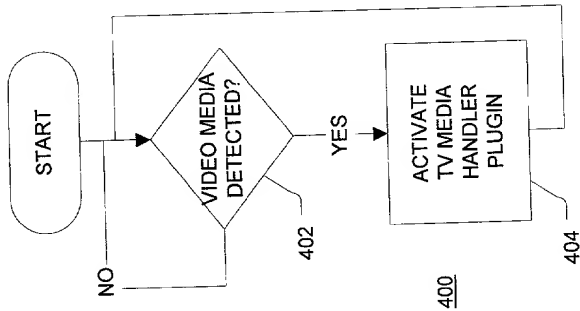


FIG. 8

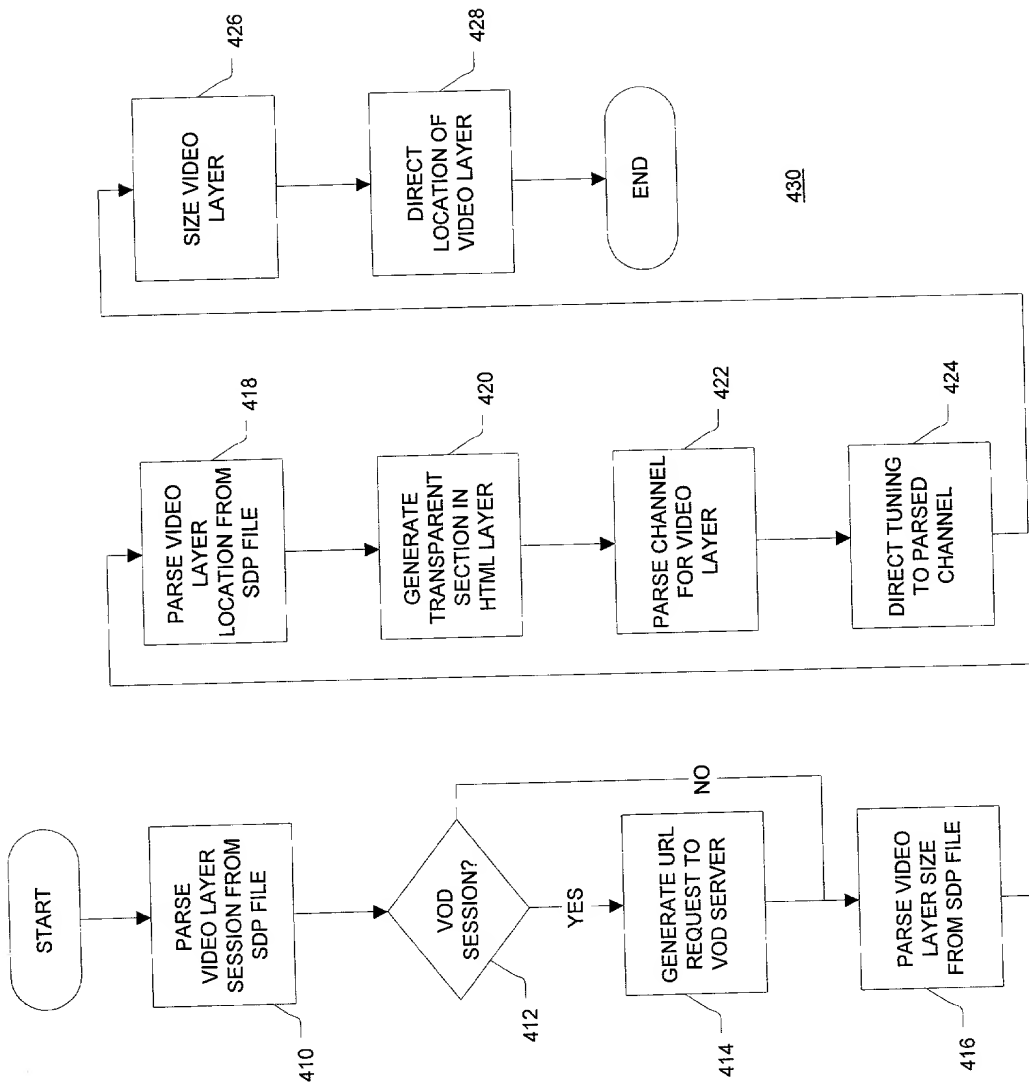


FIG. 9